

## CARES Act COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE FUNDS - FAQ

1. Can an organization submit an application for COVID-19 related costs that have not been incurred yet?

*Yes, costs to implement proactive approaches to get infrastructure into place including PPE, capital equipment, additional staffing, etc. could be submitted and approved as long as the costs will be incurred by December 1, 2020. St. Louis County may request receipts and will require certification that costs are COVID-19 related.*

*Organizations that have COVID-19 related programmatic expenses, such as increasing food access, food shelves, meal delivery, and mask distribution for community members are strongly encouraged to apply.*

2. Who comprises priority populations?

*Priority populations include Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities, people experiencing homelessness and housing instability, the elderly, LGBTQIA2S\* communities and people with disabilities.*

*\*lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, intersex and asexual and/or allies, two-spirit*

3. What is a priority setting?

*St. Louis County Public Health COVID-19 planning and response priority settings include, but are not limited to, congregate living settings such as long term care facilities, group homes, and shelters.*

4. What community organizations can apply?

Organization can include private sector, nonprofit or NGO, and schools. Other public entities such as cities, libraries, etc. do not fall under the umbrella of “community organizations” for this program.

*For the purposes of minimizing categories of CARES dollars allocation, we are also including schools (public districts and private/public charter schools) in this category. However, we are not allocating funds to cities, libraries, etc.*

5. My community organization employs one or more individuals on a part-time or seasonal basis. Are we eligible to apply?

*Organizations must have had at least one (1) full-time employee. Employees must be compensated.*

6. My community organization does not have a physical location in St. Louis County, but the majority of the clients we serve/benefit are St. Louis County residents. Can we apply?

*Nonprofits and businesses must have a physical “brick and mortar” location in St. Louis County, including their principal place of business. Principal place of business is the main location where the bulk of business occurs, generally including where the head of the business or nonprofit and senior management personnel are located.*

7. My community organization is all-volunteer. Can we apply?

*Organizations must have had at least one (1) full-time employee. Employees must be compensated.*

8. Are childcare providers, for profit and nonprofit, able to apply?

*Yes, if they meet the program eligibility standards. Childcare providers, including child care centers and home-based providers.*

9. Are sole-proprietorships eligible to apply?

*No. This includes home-based service providers. Sole-proprietorships are not legal entities and therefore not eligible for this program. Community organizations must be a legal entity to be considered for funding.*

10. I received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) grant/loan, can I apply?

*Yes, although the funds allocated under this program cannot be used to cover the same expenses of that PPP funding or other federal program funds that have been used. Applicants will be responsible for complying with the terms and requirements of the loan and grant programs from ALL sources. Receiving PPP funds will not disqualify nor discount consideration within this program.*

11. I received a US Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) to cover similar expenses, can I apply?

*Yes, although the funds allocated under this program cannot be used to cover the same expenses of that EIDL funding or other federal program funds that have been used. Applicants will be responsible for complying with the terms and requirements of the loan and grant programs from ALL sources. Receiving EIDL funds will not disqualify nor discount consideration within this program.*

12. I received a State, City or community foundation grant to cover similar expenses, can I apply?

*Yes, although the funds allocated under this program cannot be used to cover the same expenses of those agreements. Applicants will be responsible for complying with the terms and requirements of the loan and grant programs from ALL sources. Receiving additional grant funds will not disqualify nor discount consideration within this program.*

13. What is meant by “cannot be used to cover the same expenses of those agreements”?

*Funds cannot be used on the same purchase or expense. Eg. You ordered 10,000 masks in July and paid an initial amount of the invoice with SBA EIDL funds. You **cannot** pay the remainder of that bill with Community Organization Assistance funds. You **could**, however, order an additional 5,000 masks for the winter months and pay that new invoice with Community Organization Assistance funds.*

*If you have questions about eligible expenses, please reach out at least two business days prior to applying.*

14. Are organizational match funds required?

*No match funds are required.*

15. What is the total amount of funds that will be awarded? Are there limits on number of awards or award amounts?

*Six million dollars (\$6,000,000) has been allocated for this program. There are no limits on number of awards nor award amounts. Although there are no limits, this program will look to align awards with the number of people served and the expansion of services directly leading to COVID community needs being met.*

16. What the eligible costs under this program?

*Eligible Costs:*

- *Payroll expenses related to COVID-19 mitigation or response*
- *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*
- *Cleaning supplies, hand sanitizers, etc.*
- *Social distancing equipment and signage, including physical barriers*
- *COVID-19 screening equipment*
- *Priority population or setting programmatic expenses*
- *Other similar COVID-19 related expenses*

*If you have any questions about eligible costs, please reach out to us two business days prior to submitting your application*

17. What the ineligible costs under this program?

*Ineligible Costs:*

- *Costs covered by other federal, state and local COVID-19 related grant or loan programs*
- *Rent, mortgage or utility payments*
- *Legal expenses*
- *Food, travel, conferences*
- *Normal business operating expenses*
- *Loss of revenue*
- *Other non-COVID-19 related expenses and payments*

*If you have any questions about ineligible costs, please reach out to us two business days prior to submitting your application.*

18. How are “priority” programmatic expenses defined?

*These are programmatic expenses, related to COVID response, which are spent directly on a priority population and/or within a priority setting. The rest of the categories are designed to capture your “general” COVID response needs, while this particularly category is meant to quantify the amount of funds requested being spent directly on our priority concerns.*

19. What do you do if you have multiple location in St. Louis County?

*Apply using the address you would like the check sent to. If you operate under different Federal Identification numbers (EIN), then submit an application under each EIN.*

20. Is there is an option of including a programmatic expense that is tied to lost revenue? For example, group homes for people with disabilities have vacant beds while people are staying with their families and asking the group home provider to hold on to the person's bed while they are gone. Funding would not be provided in some cases during that vacant time period, resulting in lost revenue. Could this be covered?

*Yes. This would qualify as business interruption. Business interruption is defined as a period of time when a business cannot operate due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and a mandated government closure or stay at home order.*

21. For the 'cannot be used to cover the same expenses' - if we received PPP to cover payroll expenses, but we had incurred increased payroll expenses prior to receiving the PPP funds, can we request the payroll expenses not covered by PPP through these funds?

*Yes. Funds cannot be used to cover the **same month(s)** of payroll; however then can be used for non-covered payroll periods.*

22. We run an AmeriCorps VISTA program and have an addition 9- full-time "heads"- but they are considered volunteers as they are paid for by the Corporation for National Community Service. Do we include them in the "head count"?

*No. Only include headcount that are on your payroll.*

23. Do you mean serve as a particular priority group, or just at all? For example, we serve LGBTQ but lots of others too.

*That's great! Please be sure to indicate all that apply on you application.*

24. If we have employees and contractors, do we include the contractors as well?

*No. Only include headcount that are on your payroll. If contractors are related to COVID mitigation or response, though, then those can be included in your "other expenses."*

25. Will it be possible for us to print a pdf of what we've submitted?

*Unfortunately, there is not an export to PDF function. If you'd like a printed copy for record, then you are able to print the application screen to a PDF following submission.*

26. Does the one-time temporary increase in Housing Support funding through DHS count as "other grant" funding received?

*Yes, it does. However, **please remember that receiving other funds WILL NOT DISQUALIFY you from consideration.***

27. Our program serves school age children in transitional housing. They will be distance learning. We will need to supply more food during programming and assisting with distance learning. Is the food and supplies for distance learning an eligible expense?

*Yes. These expenses would qualify as they are directly related to COVID response and are serving a priority population within a priority setting.*

28. We are in the housing space for those experiencing homelessness and have a variety of setting types like transitional housing, family supportive housing and permanent supportive housing. Would all those settings be considered priority settings?

*Yes and, likely, those that you are serving (homeless or housing instable) are a priority population too.*

29. We operate 2 legally separate lines of business under the same parent umbrella. One line is skilled homecare, the other is assisted living. Can we apply for each line of business, or only one since we fall under the same parent umbrella?

*Apply using the address you would like the check sent to. If you operate under different Federal Identification numbers (EIN), then submit an application under each EIN.*

30. Are we eligible to apply for up to \$1,000 per employee?

*This program-Community Organization Assistance-does not have a cap on employees nor the amount requested per employee. Applications, if they meet the minimum requirements, will be considered regardless of size of staff and/or request.*

31. Is there a maximum number of employees?

*This program-Community Organization Assistance-does not have a cap on employees nor the amount requested per employee. Applications, if they meet the minimum requirements, will be considered regardless of size of staff and/or request.*

32. Our agency is based out of St. Paul? Can we apply?

*Yes, as long as you have physical sites in St Louis County and can submit proof. Only those locations will be considered for funding, however.*

33. How do we determine our expenses from September 1 through December 1?

*Whether using March through August or an augmentation of September through November from last FY, all we ask is that you estimate as accurately as possible. Any unspent funds will need to be returned, so please keep that in mind when providing estimates.*

34. What documentation/verification is required to submit?

*A comprehensive application will be completed. The application will require, at a minimum, the following pieces of information:*

- *Proof of location and services rendered*
- *Priority population served*
- *Priority setting served*
- *Proof of financial need and justification*
- *Budget narrative*

*A comprehensive grant reporting process will be completed. This process will require, at a minimum, the following pieces of information:*

- *Project or program information*
- *Reporting on expenditures*
- *Proof of priority population and setting service*

*As you navigate the application and reporting process, we will be available to assist you. If you have a question or concern about a required—just ask!*

35. Will funding allocations be prioritized or vetted based on number of employees and/or people served?

*Our goal is to strengthen organizations in our core human service areas that have been and continue to be particularly impacted by this emergency as they modify services to continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities.*

*CARES funding will be available to organizations **servicing priority settings and/or populations**, in accordance with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) priorities, with funding levels based on the number of people served.*

*CARES dollars will be vetted and prioritized to fill the gaps that remain for organizations where other funding streams fall short. This is critical in ensuring equity and access for populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.*

36. What is the timeline for applications, decisions and disbursement?

**Application Process**

Application Window Opens:	August 26 <sup>th</sup>	9 am CST	
Informational Session #1:	August 27 <sup>th</sup>	12 pm CST	<a href="#">[sign-up today!]</a>
Informational Session #2:	August 31 <sup>st</sup>	10 am CST	<a href="#">[sign-up today!]</a>
Application Deadline:	September 8 <sup>th</sup>	12 pm CST	

**Review Process**

Review Period Opens:	September 8 <sup>th</sup>	1 pm CST
Review Period Closes:	September 15 <sup>th</sup>	5 pm CST
Decision Notification:	September 18 <sup>th</sup>	12pm CST

**Disbursement Process**

Direct Deposit Date:	TBD	TBD
Paper Check Mail Date:	TBD	TBD
Spending Deadline:	November 30 <sup>th</sup>	5 pm CST
Reporting Due:	December 18 <sup>th</sup>	5 pm CST

37. How will funds be disbursed?

Funds will be disbursed via paper check *unless* the organization already has a vendor number and electronic payment setup with St. Louis County. If this is the case then payment will be automatically remitted using that vendor and banking information.

38. How will applications be evaluated?

Only complete applications will be considered. There will not be a follow-up period for clarification or to collect missing information. Furthermore, **all minimum qualifications** must be met prior to consideration for funding. The minimum qualifications are:

- At least 1, paid employee
- Non-Sole proprietorship
- Project or program serves a priority population **and/or**
- Project or program operates in a priority setting
- Organization is based in and serves St. Louis County
- Costs incurred are directly related to COVID-19

If minimum qualifications are met, then the application will be reviewed. Please see below for the review rubric. Programs and projects will be evaluated by a community committee using the rubric. Applications will first be scored individually. Those scores will be averaged across the committee. Applications will then be ranked and prioritized based upon those average scores. Awards will be made until funds are exhausted.

<b>Evaluation Criterion and Total Weight</b>	<b>100%</b>
Impact - The potential community impact or result of funds awarded.	40%
Timeline – The likelihood of implementing or spending funds on time.	15%
Justification – Is the request justifiable, reasonable, and directly related to COVID.	30%
Qualification – How well the request or organization will address the priorities.	15%

39. Who do we contact for more information?

Website: [www.stlouiscountymn.gov/CARES](http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/CARES)

Point of Contact: Laura Birnbaum

Phone Number: 218-726-2033 -- Select Option #2 (Community Assistance)

Email Address: [BirnbaumL@StLouisCountyMN.gov](mailto:BirnbaumL@StLouisCountyMN.gov)

\*\*The County will respond to questions within two business days. Please ensure all questions are submitted no later than September 3<sup>rd</sup> to guarantee a response.